DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 227 897 JC 830 109

AUTHOR Parochetti, Jo Ann; And Others
TITLE Summer Bridge: Preparing Disadvantaged Vocational Students for Success.
INSTITUTION Alvin Community Coll., Tex.
PUB DATE [83]
NOTE 8p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Exploration; *College Preparation; Community Colleges; Economically Disadvantaged; Educationally Disadvantaged; *High Risk Students; Minicourses; Program Development; Program Effectiveness; Reentry Students; School Holding Power; Student Development; *Student Personnel Services; Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

Summer Bridge, a 2-week, non-credit program of intensive career exploration and personal development offered to eligible freshmen at Alvin Community College, was instituted to enhance retention rates and achievement levels among high-risk students, particularly during their first semester at the college. The rationale for the program lay in the high dropout rate of disadvantaged students and the low grade point averages (GPA's) of persisters who did not receive support services. The program, designed to meet students' needs for early intervention, a positive, program-affiliated identity, and career goal-setting, focuses on specific objectives in the areas of human development, career exploration, and college survival skills. Participants are identified and recruited by admissions and counseling personnel on the basis of academic or economic disadvantage, or long absence from a school environment. Institutional support and credibility are ensured by inviting personnel from virtually every area of the college to participate in some aspect of the program, with an instructor/coordinator provided for every 7 to 15 students. Program outcomes have included successful completion of the first semester by all participants and the achievement of a GPA of at least 2.0 by 80% of the students. Among the benefits to the college have been cost savings due to higher retention rates and improved relations with the community. (HB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED227897

SUMMER BRIDGE:
PREPARING DISADVANTAGED VOCATIONAL STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

Jo Ann Parochetti
Margaret Montgomery
John Bethscheider

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Bethscheider

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Alvin Community College
3110 Mustang Road
Alvin, Texas 77511
(713) 331-6111

JC 830 109

Abstract

SUMMER BRIDGE: PREPARING DISADVANTAGED VOCATIONAL STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

Summer Bridge was implemented at Alvin Community College, Alvin, Texas, in an effort to enhance the retention rate of academically and economically disadvantaged students. Bridge is a two-week, non-credit program of intensive career exploration and personal development offered to students immediately prior to first semester of enrollment. Funded through state allocations of federal vocational monies and supplementary institutional monies, the program is free of charge to eligible students.

The program was initially implemented in 1981; evaluation of participants revealed that 100% completed the first semester, and all enrolled for a second semester. Eighty percent had a 2.0 or higher GPA for the first semester.

Three factors relevant to the establishment of Alvin Community College's Bridge program are: (1) program content, (2) institutional credit, and (3) evaluation.

Jo Ann Parochetti
Margaret Montgomery, or
John Bethscheider
Alvin Community College
3110 Mustang Road
Alvin, Texas 77511
(713) 331-6111

SUMMER BRIDGE: PREPARING DISADVANTAGED VOCATIONAL STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

Summer Bridge at Alvin Community College, Alvin, Texas, provides innovative support services to prepare academically and economically disadvantaged vocational students for success! Bridge is a two-week, non-credit program of intensive career exploration and personal development offered at no charge to eligible freshmen during the two weeks immediately prior to the fall semester. The program is a three-year institutional effort with Bridge '81 being the exploration phase; Bridge '82, refinement and expansion; and Bridge '83, institutionalization. The two main goals of the program are (1) enhancement of retention rates and (2) improvement of achievement levels of "high-risk" students, particularly during their first semester when most withdrawals usually occur.

Rationale

Studies conducted by the Special Services Project and the Learning Lab at ACC show that without supportive academic services, disadvantaged students (regardless of curriculum choice) tended to drop out at a high rate during their first semester. Furthermore, even if they persisted, their GPA's averaged one full grade point below similar students who did receive support services.

National research also generally demonstrates that most drop-outs occur within the first half of the first semester.

To assist these students to persist beyond this crucial period, a program of intensive orientation is needed before problems begin. Bridge is an attempt, prior to first enrollment, to help disadvantaged students stay in school long enough to benefit from such available support programs as Special Services, which can assist them in raising their achievement levels.

Again, both national and local research indicates a significant correlation between a disadvantaged student's positive identification with an umbrella program encompassing several services and that student's ability to persist and achieve. Additionally, a high correlation existed between student success and firmly established career goals. Therefore, Bridge was designed to answer these needs (1) early intervention, (2) a positive, program-affiliated identity, and (3) career goal-setting.

Definition of Target Population

Because we were convinced that success lay partly in creating a positive program identification, the optimum number of participants was to range from 7 - 15 students working with one primary coordinator/instructor. Identification and recruitment of potential participants was conducted by ACC Admissions and Counseling personnel. Applications were collected, and students were invited to participate. All students who were invited responded favorably, pleased that the school was offering such a program. Those students who declined to participate did so only because of prior commitments.

Participants were selected from the following categories:

-- academic disadvantage (determined by local or national placement test scores or by a past record of non-achievement in school)

-- economic disadvantage

-- returning after a period of significant absence from a school environment

All "Bridgers" were vocational-technical students enrolling for their first college semester in the fall. Insofar as possible, the students finally selected represented varying age groups, ethnicity, and backgrounds.

Program Design

Specific objectives intended to meet the program goals (retention and achievement) represented a three-fold approach to the needs of disadvantaged students:

human development (enhancement of self-esteem and confidence)

career exploration

college survival skills

Human Development Objectives

Participants will:

(1) list personal development goals

(2) demonstrate physical and mental techniques for relaxation and the reduction of stress

(3) interact in group discussions

(4) employ techniques of sound time management

Career Exploration Objectives

Participants will:

(1) complete a battery of vocational tests

(2) summarize their vocational interests, aptitudes, and abilities

(3) list the requirements and the employment outlook for at least three vocational programs at ACC

(4) identify a personal career objective and major at ACC

College Survival Skills Objectives

Participants will:

(1) physically locate such campus resources as the Library, the Learning Lab, the Counseling Center, Student Activities Office, etc.

(2) match services with the appropriate office on campus; i.e. financial aid, counseling, academic assistance

(3) demonstrate appropriate study skills and test-taking skills

(4) apply for financial aid if eligible

A daily schedule of activities was developed by the Coordinator and included small- and large-group sessions to explore personal goal-setting and to develop self-disciplining behaviors (e.g., time management). A complete battery of vocational tests was administered, and then the results were used in individual career counseling and academic advising. Each student maintained a daily journal that included test result information and counseling recommendations.

In addition, students visited each ACC vocational department, where they participated in a short "hands-on" activity representative of a particular occupation. These activities were conducted by department chairpeople. Even during lunch, which was provided free to participants, guest speakers discussed such topics as math anxiety, occupational outlooks, and institutional resources for students.

Institutional Support and Credibility

Institutional support and credibility was insured by inviting personnel from virtually every area of the college to participate in some aspect of Bridge. This utilization of school personnel also kept program costs low. Funding from state-allocated federal vocational monies provided salaries for the program coordinator and two workshop presenters, as well as program supplies.

Other staffing needs were met by regular college employees. Meals were provided by the institution.

The following chart indicates the institutional units involved in the Bridge program project:

Publicity:	Student Activities
Recruitment:	Admissions, Counseling
Selecting Participants:	Occupational-Technical, Special Services
Program:	Counseling Center, Financial Aid, the Library, the Learning Lab, Developmental Program faculty, all Occupational-Technical chairpeople

Evaluation

One hundred percent of the first group of participants (1981) completed their first semester as full-time students, and eighty percent of these achieved a GPA of at least 2.0. All also re-enrolled for a second semester. (Information on Bridge '82 is not yet available.)

All participants have rated the program highly as being both enjoyable and contributing to their self-confidence and knowledge.

Benefits for the institution as a result of Bridge include cost savings due to high retention rates, potentially higher completion rates for participants, and beneficial college-community relations.

All in all, everyone involved is well pleased with the program, and we anticipate its establishment as a regular part of the ACC program of services to students.

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges
8118 Math-Sciences Building
University of California
Los Angeles, California 90024

APR 22 1983